

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

Claims 1-4 (canceled)

Claim 5 (currently amended): A method for producing a semiconductor laser device as ~~recited in claim 1~~, the method comprising the steps of:

forming a ~~pair of electrodes~~ first and a second electrode on opposite faces of ~~[[a]]~~ the semiconductor substrate on which a semiconductor thin film including ~~[[an]]~~ the active layer is laminated;

defining a light emitting surface on a side face of the semiconductor substrate to which the active layer and an edge of at least one of the electrodes ~~[[are]]~~ is exposed; and

forming a protective film on the light emitting surface by vapor deposition;

wherein the protective film forming step comprises the step of masking the edge of the ~~electrode~~ at least one of the electrodes with a jig spaced a predetermined distance from the edge of the ~~electrode~~ at least one of the electrodes so as to indirectly shield the edge of the ~~electrode~~ at least one of the electrodes from a vapor deposition source during the vapor deposition, whereby the protective film is formed as having a smaller thickness on the edge of the ~~electrode~~ at least one of the electrodes than on the active layer.

Claim 6 (currently amended): A method for producing a semiconductor laser device as ~~recited in claim 1~~, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a laser bar having light emitting surfaces respectively defined on opposite side faces thereof to which an active layer thereof and ~~edges~~ an edge of ~~electrodes~~ at least one electrode thereof ~~[[are]]~~ is exposed;

forming ~~a protective films~~ a film on the respective light emitting surfaces of the laser bar by vapor deposition; and

dicing the laser bar formed with the protective ~~films~~ film;

wherein the protective film forming step comprises the step of masking the ~~edges~~ edge of the ~~electrodes~~ at least one electrode with a jig spaced a predetermined distance from the ~~edges~~ edge of the ~~electrodes~~ at least one electrode so as to indirectly shield the ~~edges~~ edge of the ~~electrodes~~ at least one electrode exposed to the light emitting surfaces of the laser bar from a vapor deposition

source during the vapor deposition, whereby the protective ~~films are~~ film is formed as having a smaller thickness on the ~~edges of edge of the electrodes at least one electrode~~ than on the active layer.

Claim 7 (previously presented): A method as set forth in claim 6, wherein the predetermined distance is 25 to 40 $\mu$ m.

Claim 8 (currently amended): A method as set forth in claim 6, wherein the protective ~~films each have~~ film has a laminate structure comprising a layer composed of one of Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, SiO<sub>2</sub> and TiO<sub>2</sub> and an Si layer, the Si layer being formed by vapor deposition while the ~~edges edge of the electrodes at least one electrode~~ are masked with the jig.

Claim 9 (currently amended): A jig for use in a method as recited in claim 6, the jig comprising:

a base on which a laser bar is to be placed with ~~its~~ the at least one electrode opposed to the base; and

a shield member projecting upright from an edge of the base for masking ~~[[an]]~~ the edge of the at least one electrode exposed to a light emitting surface of the laser bar;

wherein, when the laser bar is placed on the base, the shield member is spaced a predetermined distance from the edge of the at least one electrode of the laser bar.

Claim 10 (previously presented): A jig as set forth in claim 9, wherein the predetermined distance is 25 to 40 $\mu$ m.

Claim 11 (previously presented): A jig as set forth in claim 9, wherein the shield member has a height such that an upper edge thereof is located at a level lower than an active layer of the laser bar exposed to the light emitting surface when the laser bar is placed on the base.

Claim 12 (previously presented): A jig as set forth in claim 9, wherein the base is rectangular, and the shield member includes two shield members which respectively project upright from opposite edges of the base in opposed relation.